

ROD & Custom

IND

SPEED TUNING

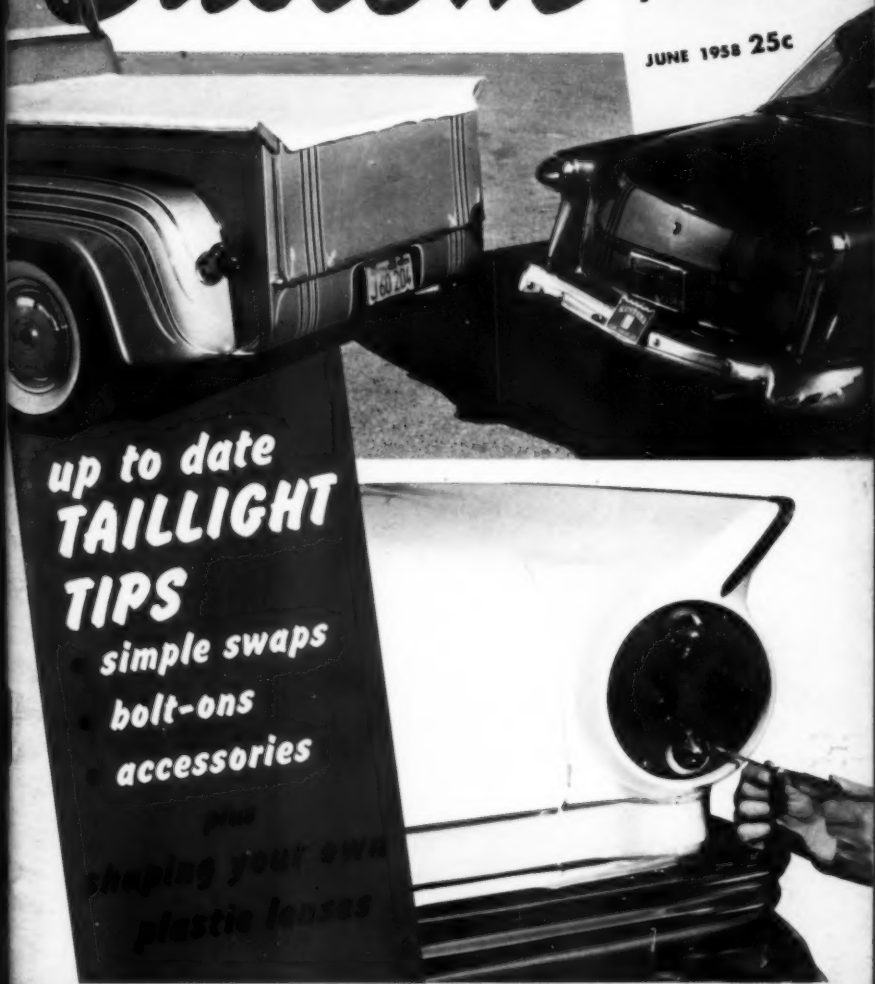
how to get
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your engine

JUNE 1958 25c

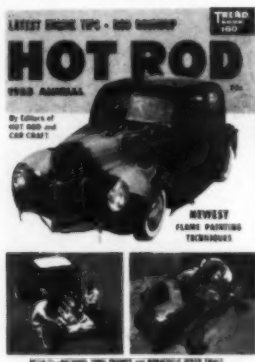
up to date
**TAILLIGHT
TIPS**

simple swaps
bolt-ons
accessories

shaping your own
plastic lenses



**THOSE
TWO
FAMOUS
CAR
ANNUALS**



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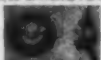
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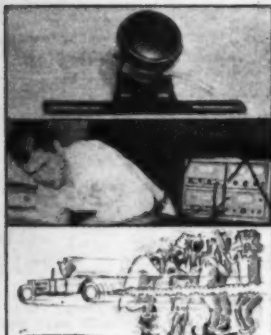
Box RC1904
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JUNE
1958

In this month's

ROD &
*Custom*ROBERT E. PETERSEN
SPENCER MURRAY
LYNN WINELAND
A. M. BENEDICT
W. C. KINGpublisher
editor
graphic ed.
advertising dir.
advertising mgr.

FEATURES



If you paused long enough to peruse this month's cover, you've seen this issue has a lot of...

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Author, and SAE member, Roger Huntington comes up with some valuable information on...

SPEED TUNING 28

Humorist Gerald Roudé shows up with a cutie this month. As near as we can decipher it's about...

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THAT SPECIAL SOMETHIN'

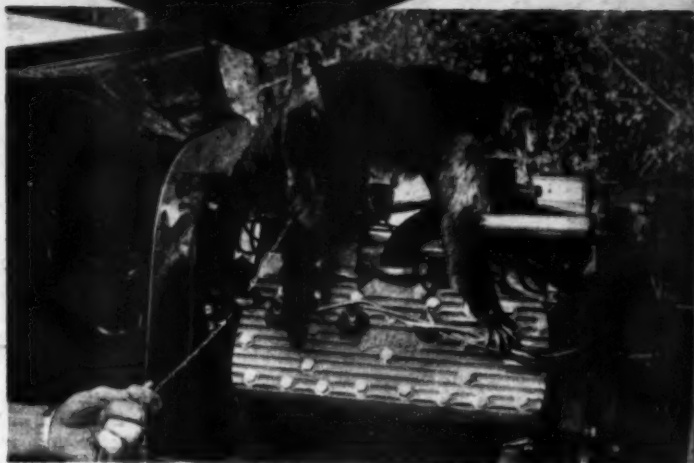
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the starting line



HOW MANY OF YOU were sufficiently inspired by our July and September, '57, issues—dedicated wholly to, first, Ford's good old Model A and then the T—to dig up one of the ancient Henry-built and begin restoring it to mint condition? Or were you prompted by our articles to salvage a rusty old body to place atop that half-finished rod out in your garage? Whatever effect our series of articles on the Model A's and T's had on you, we'd like to hear about it. Send us photographs of your handiwork along these lines—shots taken perhaps during restoration or salvation, and pictures made of your pride and joy as it has progressed to date. Let us know if you've found any particularly ripe areas from which salvageable A or T parts can be scrounged, or if you've worked out any shortcuts in returning these old veteran's parts to like-new condition. If we can keep alive the intense interest we stirred up with the issues last year, then we can keep pace with the requests of readers who ask that something pertaining to older automobiles be included in the magazine each month. Drop us a letter, or a card will do; anything to keep us posted in this intriguing field of auto-mania. And we'll reciprocate by keeping you up to date. Let's hear from you, even if all you have to say is *Howdy!*

With the early flurry of excitement over those wee little miniature sports-type rods, known variously as Go Karts, Fun Rods, etc., easing off, and now that a definite niche has been found for them in the motor-ing world, it's time we paused and took stock of the situation and looked at it from an objective viewpoint. What effect has this new sport had on hot rodding as a whole? Will the interest in these 4-wheel screamers last out the year? These and many more questions will be answered next month. And for those who like to get their hands dirty, SAE member Roger Huntington promises a conclusive article on hopping up the 2-stroke engine—something not previously entered into, since the more familiar 4-cycle engines have been receiving all our attention over the years. All of this will be required readin' whether you're a fan of the new hobby or not for our crystal ball reveals that somehow, somewhere the sport will eventually make its mark on you.

B.M. ●

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MEN, AGES 17 to 55

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OUR READERS

HOW-TO-DO-ITS

Several of my friends and I have followed your suggested how-to-do-its on our cars. Most have worked out exactly as you said, but others tend to get a bit complicated when it turns up that you've not made mention of a few of the steps. It has been agreed that your photo stories are great but, *please*, make them more precise.

W. J. Bayly

Detroit, Mich.

● We try to be as concise and accurate as possible but, unfortunately, we are sometimes cramped for space. However, the operations or procedures that are generally omitted are so simple that it would take the average individual only a few moments of thought to think his way through. Often, these obvious steps are omitted for clarity.

BLESS 'EM ALL

Just thought you'd be interested to know that the Flatheads aren't dead yet. Here's a shot of my B/Altered coupe with some of the hardware picked up locally over the past year. "The Mole" has turned over 115 in the 1/4 mile on gas with 296" engine that was first built up in 1950. You've heard it before, I'll say it again, "God Bless the Flatheads!"

J. Rawlings
(The Molekeeper)

Dayton, Ohio



ANCON RIDES AGAIN

In the Readers Write section of the February issue a fan of yours, Ancon Noosebush, states that she and her sister have built a new kind of car that

ROD & CUSTOM • JUNE, 1958

WRITE—or wrong

will go "...faster than money." I, for one, would like to see it. If what Noosebush (Man, what a moniker) says is true, this must be some car. Ronnie Brown Louisville, Kentucky

● We have been unable to corner the evasive Miss Noosebush, though she would be of great help to us in answering not only your letter, Ronnie, but the dozens of others we have received. The closest we've been able to come is that she flits about from one place to another, quite as though she might be a traveling musician (or at least associated with one) and

we always miss her by but a few scant hours. Illustrator Millar imagines her money-fast creation something like this:



(continued on p. 57)



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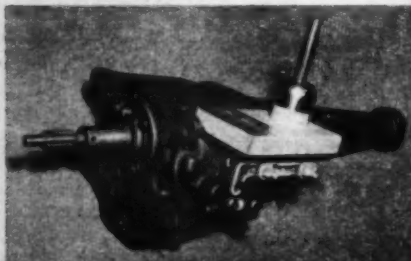
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automart

Tubular chrome bars for '55, '56, '57 Fords and '56 Chevrolets. Smooth unbroken lines sweep all the way across and curve backward on each side. Parking lights install behind the grille, yet light shows through. Simple to assemble and install. Specify model. \$24.95 to \$34.95 complete. **CALIFORNIA CUSTOM**, 1807 W. 65th St., Los Angeles 47, Calif.

Convert any Chevrolet column to floor shift in 1 hour. Easy to install. 1940 thru '54-'55 thru '58. Specify standard or overdrive and year. These units built for fast shifts and same shift pattern as standard trans. Price \$29.95 plus freight. **LOU SCHORSCH RACING EQUIPMENT**, 2550 North Seaman Street, El Monte, California.



A revolutionary new design open end wrench was introduced in Europe and has been accepted by automotive mechanics with unparalleled success. Today about 75% of all sold in Europe are of this design. This new wrench grips a nut at four places on the flat portions of the nut, and makes it possible to turn even badly worn nuts and bolts. The **NUTMASTER Wrench** is also lighter and less bulky than conventional wrenches. Its positive grip on any nut reduces slippage and skinned knuckles. Most popular sizes are available. **THE NEW BRITAIN MACHINE CO., NEW BRITAIN, CONN.**

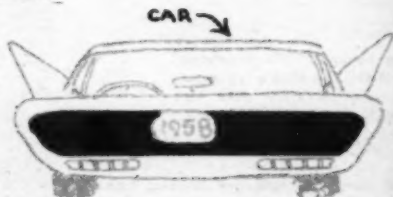
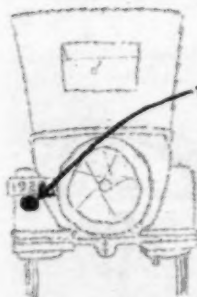


NHRA's 1958 Drag Racing handbook is a must for all enthusiasts. If you plan to compete this year or want to know more about what you're watching, send 25¢ to **NATIONAL HOT ROD ASSOCIATION**, 1171 N. Vermont, Los Angeles 29, California.

Taillight *tales*

THE PASSING YEARS have seen the development of the lowly taillight from a small, round dot of red to giant vermilion "windows" filling nearly half the rear of an outswung fender or extending almost all the way across a car's rear. But no matter the shape, size or placement, taillights continue to perform their important function of warning following vehicles of a car ahead. For years auto designers had tired of their chores by the time they got around to the taillight department and folded up their drawings after having quickly sketched in a circular blob anywhere attachment could be arranged. Nowadays it would seem that the stylists are designing their products with taillights as the starting place. But whatever the reasons or procedures in their design and construction, they offer the customizer a fertile field in which to practice his hobby. Alterations can vary from the simplest swap or addition of an accessory store lamp, to the complete revamping of his chariot's hindside. To satisfy the cravings of customizing aspirants, no matter how simple or profound their taillight wants are, the ensuing pages should hold something of interest to them all.

photos by winfield, barris, spence



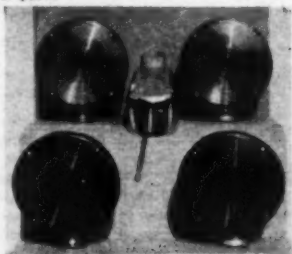
Taillight *takes*

BOLT-ON glamourizing



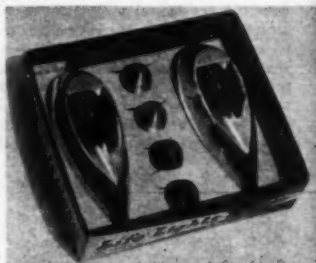
This flush-attaching, ribbed stop and taillight is made by the Arrow Lite Co., comes with chromed rim and attachment studs. At most local dealers, it sells for low \$3.40

A.M.I. combination stop, tail, and turn lights, with or without turn switch. At most dealers, complete set sells for \$28.95 or single units are \$4.40 painted black, \$5.50 chromed.



Extra large stop light, made by Do-Ray, in black-painted housing, for \$3.00, or can be had in satin chrome finish for additional cost. Available at most accessory stores.

Appealing Life-Lite comes with variety of lens colors, for use as clearance lights, or with red lenses as taillight. A set, as shown, at most dealers for only \$7.95.



Dual chrome plated Yankee #975 hat-styled tail and/or side lamps. Available at your nearest auto parts and accessory store for the reasonable sum of \$1.49 per light unit.

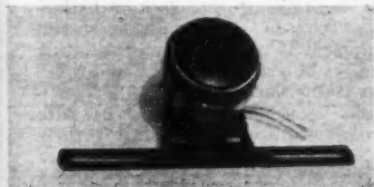
Small motorcycle lights are chromed, formed in bullet shape with choice of lens coloring. Roy's Center, in Compton, Calif. offers a pair of these neat units for only \$6.45.



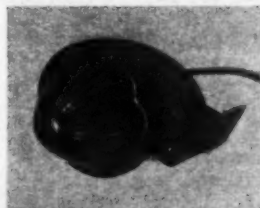
RUNDOWN

your car with screwdriver and pliers

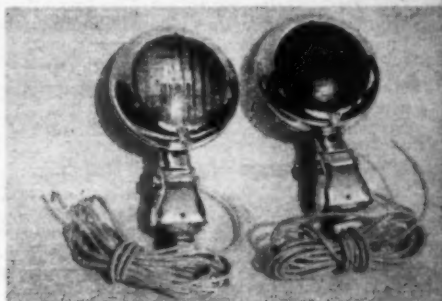
PROCEEDING from the simplest kind of alteration in the taillight department on up to the more complicated restyling treatments, here we go with a smattering of some of the more simply installed accessory lights available at your nearest auto supply store. All are bolt-ons, meaning that they do not necessarily replace a stock taillight but are to be simply mounted wherever space at the rear of your car permits. They can be wired to either light when the brakes are applied, or to shine whenever the car's other exterior lights are on. Or they can be hooked up to perform both functions if they are built to receive double-filament bulbs.



Combination tail, stop, brake and license light assembly will fit any car. Available from Service Center in Los Angeles, handy unit can be had for a real low \$2.29.

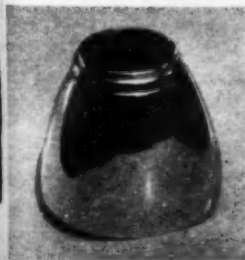


Standard clearance lights have only single filament bulb, but will work as stop or tail lights, or side lights. Available in several sizes, prices range from 98¢ up.

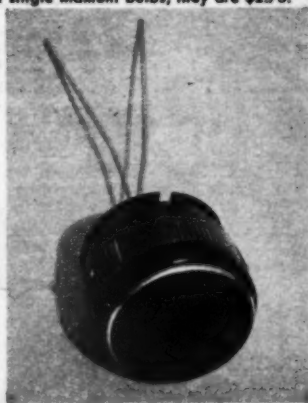


Universal tail, stop, park and backup lights are chrome plated. They have swivel base and come with mounting bolts. Fitted with single filament bulbs, they are \$2.75.

This is the same as at the top of this page, but comes without the license bracket, tho the license light is still incorporated. This style can be had for price of \$1.75.



Newhouse Automotive manufactures this bullet light which can be bolted in place, or frenched onto any car for that custom look. They come in black or chrome and are \$12.95 a pair.



Taillight *takes*


REPLACEMENT

typical custom


THERE ARE ANY number of taillight units available at accessory stores or auto parts outlets, the Satel-Lite shown here being among the newest and most up-to-date of them all. Built exclusively for the Ford line of cars, the lens fits all '57 Fords and the 'Bird, and the '58 Ranchero—only current-year model to retain the large circular lens housings. To be distinguished from the ordinary accessory light (mounted in conjunction with the stock lens units) this distinctive lamp replaces the taillight with which the car came equipped. Therefore while no

customizing, as far as metalwork or repainting is concerned, is needed, the use of an item such as this will actually lend the car a new look of distinction. Too, no experience or special equipment is needed since installation requires only a screwdriver and a $\frac{1}{2}$ " open-end wrench.

The Satel-Lites are available through California Custom, or their dealers, at 1807 W. 65th Street, Los Angeles 47, Calif. And they're priced at only \$14.95 per pair—a real inexpensive item in relation to the custom treatment it lends your car.



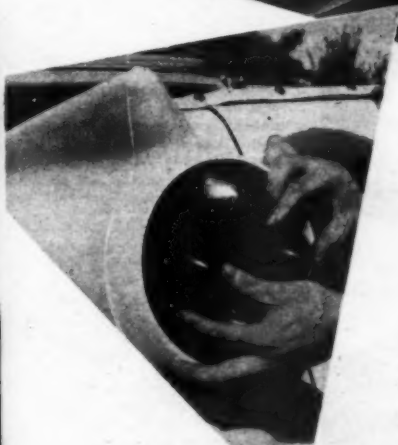
A screwdriver is needed to remove the stock Ford taillight from its housing. The custom light to be added fits all '57 Fords and the '58 Ranchero—only model with the older circular housing and chrome rim.



The custom Satel-Lite must be assembled, so the two red plastic "bombs" and the two of chrome plated metal are bolted to the backing or disc which itself is of plastic. The custom lights are priced at \$14.95 pr.

EXAMPLE

lenses, simply installed



Voilà! Ten minutes time and a relatively small cash outlay and your Ford is as modern as tomorrow with Satal-Lites to warn closely following motorists. Units can be had from California Custom Co., Los Angeles, California.

Last step is simply replacing the custom unit with the same screws that retained the original assembly. Washers, provided in the kit, surround tapped inserts so new plastic disc seats squarely in the hole. Don't bear down too hard!

JUNE, 1958

Taillight

takes

SHAPE YOUR

only

THOSE OF YOU desirous of something a little more original in the way of taillights than an accessory bolt-on, or the simple but perhaps unimaginative swap of a lens from one make of car to another, might like to try your hand at something creative. Sheets of red plastic or lucite can be

Whatever the make of car, the first step in designing your own taillight lens is to remove the stock unit. Besides giving you room to work, it also reveals to you lens attachment procedure which might affect your taillight design somewhat.

The lens outline is traced onto a sheet of paper. Because your rim and/or taillight opening might appear symmetrical but is actually not, it is best to trace in this manner than to use ruler and compass. The outline, once put on paper, is carefully ...

OWN PLASTIC LENSES

your imagination limits you

obtained from a plastic supply house, a surplus store or a large hardware outlet, and from them can be carved an infinite variety of lenses. The stuff is easily sawed, carved, filed and drilled, and one's imagination is the sole limiting factor to the number of treatments possible.

To get you started, Barris shows how he developed a basic lens design to fit within the lamp housing of a '54 Ford. Armed with this information, you should have little trouble in working out a suitable lens treatment for your own custom.



... cut with scissors and carefully trimmed until it fits snugly within the taillight rim. Now the outline of the paper template is transferred to the wrapping of the plastic. It is important that the protective paper covering be left on until last step.

A small coping saw, or an electric jig saw if one is available to you, is used to cut the paper-covered plastic. In this photo parallel lines, dividing the circle into three segments, are drawn denoting center line of the half-circle fins to be added.



Taillight *takes*

SHAPE YOUR

If you cannot borrow an electric grinder, a file can be used to smooth the edges of your new lens until it fits tightly inside the chrome rim. Note that the covering is still affixed to prevent handling from scratching the plastic's soft surface.



From time to time the disc is checked for proper fit in the housing. If it is too small or has irregularities in the edge, white light will show through ruining the "professional" look your lens would otherwise have had if you had been more careful with this operation.



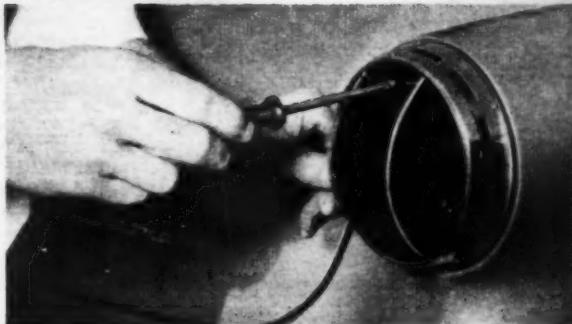
Attachment screw holes, marked on the paper template you started with, are indicated on the lens and drilled. Because plastic is quite soft, a hand drill can be used as easily as the electric type shown here. The drill size is $\frac{1}{16}$ " larger than the screws used in mounting.

R OWN PLASTIC LENSES continued



Two half circles have now been cut using the same steps as for the lens itself, and the paper backing has been peeled from both sides of all pieces. Now plastic/lucite cement is applied to edge and the "flns" pressed down and held until cement hardens.

The lens is now installed using the original screws that held down the stock unit. The flns, which glow as red as the plastic behind them, are visible from the sides, a necessity for safety purposes when backing out of a driveway at night or at dimly lit crossroads.



All that has been expended to make the rear of this Ford different from the others, is \$2.00 for plastic and a bottle of cement, and a couple of otherwise idle hours. Just a little forethought and this idea can be used on your own car no matter the make.

Taillight *takes*

THE RADICAL BIT

shovin' metal around takes experience



AS SOON as you cut through the metal surface of your car, it's a safe bet that both welding and leading are going to be needed before you're done. And you'll have to prime and paint the affected areas, too. So experience — as well as a welding outfit and a compressor with spray gun (and the materials needed for these items) — is a real prerequisite. Thus with you readers warned, we're off on a taillight switch that is a little more radical than those which preceded.

For those who don't recognize the ingredients in this recipe, you'll need a '49-'51 Ford, the hood "scoops" from a '57 Chevrolet and a couple of red plastic lenses from the center of a '58 Chevy's taillights. Now watch closely and see how bodyman Gene Winfield did the task on Frank Poli's 2-door.

It seems incongruous that the hood scoops on this Chevy, and the rear end of this already nice looking Ford should meet, but meet they did and here's how it was made to come about.



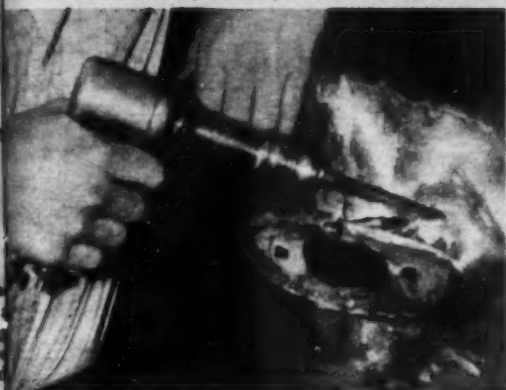
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& CUSTOM
JUNE, 1958



An air chisel quickly relieves the Ford of the stock taillight's mounting base. Tin snips or cold chisel could also be used if you don't have access to the illustrated device. Remove only metal portions where it flairs away from the fender proper.



A little work with the hammer and dolly will straighten metal distorted during the cutting operation and to flatten out any irregularities in surface. At this point it should be mentioned that a hundred light taps are better than ten hard ones.

The scoop has been tried for fit into the fender opening and it was found that the radius of the windsplit did not conform to that of the scoop, so a little shrinking here, stretching there is necessary before the precise match needed is attained.



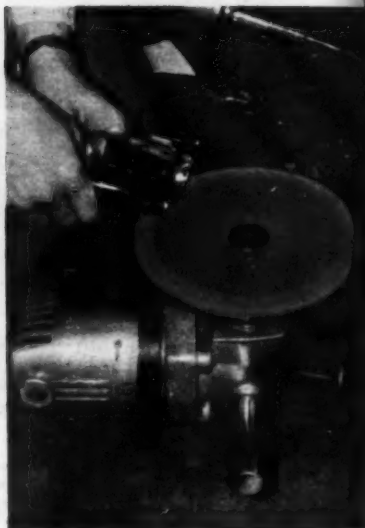
Taillight *takes*

THE RADICAL BT

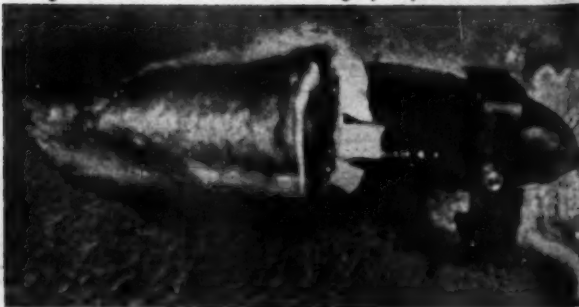


A little grinding on the Chevy scoops might be needed, a body grinder being here employed for the task. The lip at end of scoop has also to be ground off so taillight lenses will seat snugly within the round opening. Be careful not to scar the visible chrome.

The area of the hole not occupied by the little scoop is now filled with sheetmetal cut to match a paper pattern. This is where experience will spell the difference between success and failure for too hot a torch flame will warp metal, too cold a flame won't weld!



Seen from inside the trunk compartment of the Ford, this is the bracket you will have to duplicate in order to hold the scoop in position. A single bolt, screwed into the already-tapped hole in the Chevy scoop, passes through the bracket and holds the unit tightly in position on the fender.



BT continued



A Dodge taillight lens was first used in the scoop, and it is shown here being cut slightly on grinder for precise fit. Owner later switched over to the center portion of a '53 Chevy taillight assembly. Double-filament bulb socket and wires are needed.

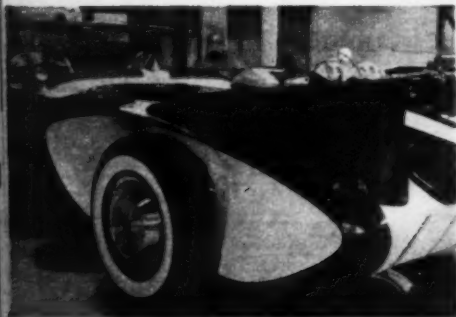


The finished project. Not as difficult as it might seem at first glance, this taillight switch resembles slightly the Corvette unit but more closely matches Ford fender contours and is not overly large for the relatively small car. Cash outlay—\$25.00, not including repainting.

ROD & CUSTOM • JUNE, 1958

Taillight *takes*

THOUGH NONE of the taillight examples shown on these pages necessarily fall into the "simple" category, one of these photos just might give you a clue as to what would go well with the styling treatment of your car. All require metal-mangling, of course, and are not to be undertaken by the novice having only a smattering of customizing knowledge. Unless you're blessed with the tools and equipment required, drop by your nearest restyling parlor and ask the man to name his price.



A Chrysler light in an unfamiliar setting. This '57 lens warns of a radical custom ahead.



The familiar Cadillac fin remains, but the lens opening has been changed to take a Mert unit.

24

RADICAL

far from simple,



Aerial in a channel. Half an exhaust tube was worked above Packard lens on a Chevy.



Oldsmobile lens on an Olds—but years differ. Note the peekaboo opening showing skywork.

ROD & CUSTOM

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JUNE

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ple,

ROUNDUP

each example here has its own merits



Another solution for this '49-'51 Ford product. A Vickie has been fitted with Corvette units.

(Below) Sneaky, aren't we. No metalwork needed for this, though at first glance it seems so.

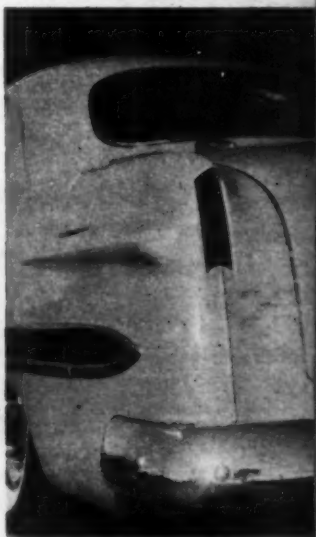


Transposed Edsel taillights have been worked into new rear-end styling of a Cameo pickup.



(Below) Horizontal lens on '49 Ford has given way to narrow vertical lens from an old Stude.

(Below) Sheet lucite was shaped to fill the outward-canted openings built into the rear of a radically reworked Corvette.



ers diffi-
skywork.

CUSTOM

JUNE, 1958

Frank Poli's '50 Ford is known as...

Frank Poli's '50 Ford is typical of the hundreds of cars of this model still undergoing extensive changes. However, it is doubtful if a cleaner or more truly sanitary example can be found. Owner Poli seldom drives the Cutey for fear of subjecting it to the rigors of fender-bashing traffic, his transportation consists of another '50 Ford. Interesting taillight treatment on this car is shown in how-to-do-it form on pages 20-23 of this issue. In view at right can be seen the frenched headlights with chrome-lined rims, the barred grille and the downward curving chrome trim which cleverly leads the eye down to the scooped-front fender skirts with their two small teeth.

Photos by Gene Winfield



as...

the far west cutey



Lowering has not been used for express purpose of seeing how far down the car would go, but rather to enhance its appeal and make it appear longer than it actually is. Side trim lends not only eye appeal but is functional in protecting car's sides from damage by adjacent doors.

Contrasting shades of Naugahyde richen what originally was the stark interior common to Ford's '50 model run. Simple dash layout has been wisely left alone other than 2-tone paint to match upholstery. Note the pleated pedal pads and the chrome window rails throughout.

ROD & CUSTOM • JUNE, 1958





SPEED TUNING

how to get the most from your engine

THERE ARE three reasons why the science of simple engine "tuning" is more important to the hot rodder today than ever before: (1) It's getting harder and harder to improve on factory performance with the usual speed equipment like multi-carb manifolds, hot cams, etc.; (2) the costs of all phases of the motoring sport are getting so high nowadays that many fellows couldn't afford this special equipment if they wanted it; and (3) the late high-horsepower engines were more sensitive to small variations in carburetion and ignition than older engines — (and, of course, the way they come from the factory nowadays is a crying shame!).

In other words, it will behoove us today to get hep on the little things that will get us the most out of what we already have — those fine tuning adjustments that are standard proced-

ure with our top racing mechanics. Chances are you can get a substantial performance boost without spending more than a few bucks, maybe not a dime. It's just work ... and here's how:

CARBURETION

Optimum engine performance is obtained if we can arrange to get an air-fuel mixture ratio of about $12\frac{1}{2}:1$ (with the fuel well atomized or in vapor form) in all the cylinders on their suction strokes. This is not quite as simple as it sounds.

In the first place, if your car is quite old your carburetor may be in poor mechanical shape. The passages and jets may be crudded up with fuel deposits; the gaskets may be leaking; the leather pump packing may be cracked, etc. The carb can't possibly meter effectively under these conditions. The first order here would be to rip it off

ROD & CUSTOM



photos / Lynn

By ROGER HUNTINGTON, SAE

and rebuild it completely. Kits for overhauling any carb model — consisting of new gaskets, packings, washers, etc. — can be bought for a few bucks at any auto parts house. The carb should be disassembled completely and all metal parts soaked for a couple of hours in "Gunk," or some other good cleaning solution — followed by a thorough rinse in clean gasoline or water, and drying. When you're done you'll have a carburetor that's as good as new.

While the carb is down, however, several other points should be checked. By far your worst enemy of a smooth idle and flexible low-end performance is *air leakage* below the throttle butterflies. A lot of this leakage can come through the throttle shaft holes and around the butterfly itself (when it's closed in the idle position). Check your shafts for loose, sloppy fits, and replace them if worn. Unless your butterflies

have been bent or nicked you can probably seal them okay by the following method: Loosen the butterfly retaining screws slightly, then close the throttle firmly. By tapping the butterfly plate gently with a screwdriver or some such it will shift and center itself in the throttle bore. Then simply tighten up the screws again (leaving the throttle closed to hold it in position). A well-centered butterfly and snug throttle shaft can make a big difference in your low-end running — especially with multi-carb installations, where air leaks are multiplied by the number of carburetors.

All auto enthusiasts seem anxious to change carb jets; if they have the carb apart it's hard not to do *something*. Unfortunately there's no magic here. The stock jets are pretty close to optimum for a given carburetor. Even when the air flow through the carb is changed radically — like when you use dual carbs and cut the air flow through each in half, or when you increase air flow by boring and stroking — you do not run into trouble. After all, the carb doesn't know whether you're running one carb at 2000 rpm or two carbs at 4000; the air flow would be about the same in either case. Only when you use a very small carburetor (small venturi area) on a big, hairy engine would the thing tend to lean out. And this would only be at the top end when the pressure drop across the carb (manifold vacuum) might exceed 10 or 12" of mercury — an air flow equivalent to roughly 130 hp per venturi throat. We would never get into this range in our work. So I would definitely *start* your experimenting with stock jets.

If possible check your mixture on an exhaust gas analyzer. If the analyzer is not available, and there is some stumbling at part throttle, try going .001 to .003" larger on the main metering jets. Don't fiddle with the power jets. These are opened when manifold vacuum drops below about 6", so have no effect on the cruising mixture. Any needed changes can be made up on the main jets. And one other point before you button up the carb. Check float level carefully. The method of setting

(continued)

SPEED TUNING continued

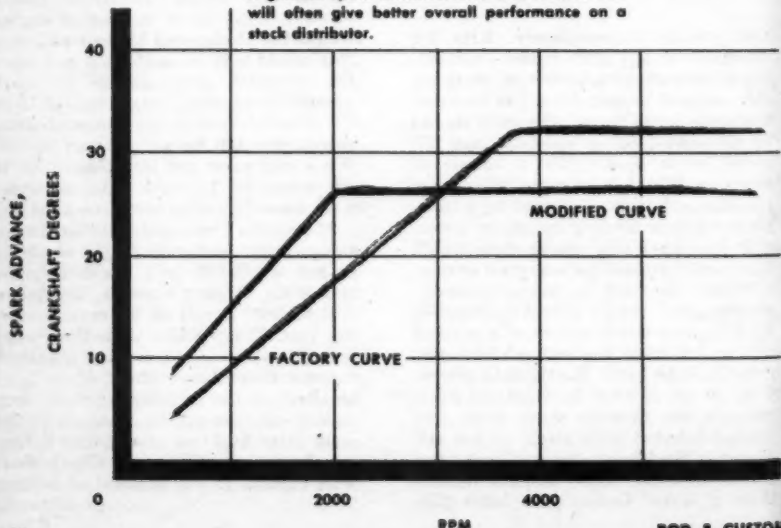
will vary with the car model, so get a shop manual for instructions. Factory recommended level should be about right on most street engines.

After you get the carb back on the car there are still a couple of adjustments that can affect performance considerably. There is the idle mixture screw and throttle stop adjustment. The mixture adjustment is critical in the range from 20 to 30 mph where the fuel feed is transferring from the idle to main circuit. Garages generally adjust to get the highest vacuum reading at idle speed. This is fine...but this must be checked out by slowly accelerating the engine from idle speed up to around 1500 rpm (it must be slow or the accelerating pump will cut in), and then see if there is any roughness in this range. You may have to richen the idle mixture a little to get a smooth transition here. The idle speed is set with the throttle stop screw. Many fellows make the mistake of trying to set this too low. Something around 450-500 rpm is low enough in any case; if the car has an automatic trans and creeps, a stab on the brake will solve your problem.

The accelerator pump may want some attention. On most carburetors the pump link can be set in two or three different holes in the lever arm to vary the pump stroke. Experiment with this. Usually with multiple carbs best response and flexibility is obtained when the pumps are on the *shortest* stroke — or even when one is cut out altogether. Sometimes, with one carb, *more* pump stroke will help. And, finally, it's always a good idea to check your fuel pump pressure to see if it's in the range recommended by the carburetor manufacturer — under all operating conditions. Too little pressure can burn pistons and valves, while too much can sink the needle and completely flood the engine.

Any discussion of carburetion should include efficient air feed. For instance, some old-style oil bath air cleaners can rob 6 or 8 hp easy. Why not try a later paper type with less restriction. (Incidentally, it is generally necessary to go up one step in main jet size when air cleaner restriction is reduced a lot because the carbs are calibrated to allow for this.) We have discussed the benefits of inducting cool air many

A general spark advance curve modification that will often give better overall performance on a stock distributor.



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times before; the lower the intake air temp the more pounds in each cubic foot — so the more horsepower output. You might think about working up some simple duct arrangement to pipe cool air from the grille to the carbs (or an air scoop will do it). It doesn't need to cost much. And, of course, in warm weather you can block the exhaust heat risers to the manifold. This is very effective, and doesn't hurt flexibility in temperatures over 55° F.

With all this done — and assuming you have been careful to synchronize the throttle linkage on multi-carb installations — you should have pretty efficient carburetion, that can add as much as 10 to 15 hp to your engine.

THE HOT SPARK

Yes, after you've got your optimum fuel-air mixture into the cylinders you have got to get it lit. This is not as simple as it sounds either.

The first order of business is a good clean set of spark plugs — of the proper heat range. You don't necessarily need new ones. A good sandblast job on your present plugs — being sure to remove any sand particles lodged between porcelain and shell — will probably suffice. Best gap setting for street driving should be between .027 and .035". If you have increased the compression ratio above stock on your engine you may need a one-step "cooler" plug, or one that will conduct heat away from

Outstanding performance is given by this modified Chevy V8 in a '40 Ford, much of it coming from being carefully tuned — regularly.

the electrodes faster. There is no hard and fast rule here; best way to tell if you have the right heat range is to study the appearance of the plug tip after a couple of hard bursts of acceleration. The tips should be light tan or straw color. If they appear white and burned you need a cooler plug; if they are oily and wet, a step hotter plug will run cleaner.

Another vital factor in getting a good hot spark is having the points closed as long as possible for maximum coil saturation. This is generally checked by measuring the breaker point gap. This is not a very reliable method because looseness of the breaker plate can affect it a lot. It is recommended that you check breaker cam dwell angle on an ignition testing machine. (This is the rotation of the distributor cam while points are closed.) This will generally run from 22 to 34° on late V-8 engines with single points. Consult a shop manual. Incidentally, an inexpensive double breaker plate conversion for your distributor will increase this dwell angle substantially, and give that much hotter spark at high rpm.
(continued)

Making the most of what you have is often better — certainly cheaper! — than adding new equipment. Keep your engine in top tune.



SPEED TUNING

Other vital factors in the spark picture are the *condition* of the points (whether pitted and worn), condition of the wiring, and the condenser and coil. The points and condenser can be replaced for a few cents, so why not? The coil can be checked out on an ignition testing machine. The wiring is the toughest of all. If you're not in a position to replace the cheap factory leads with good quality wiring, the next best thing is to check present wiring carefully by wiping clean with a cloth moistened with kerosene; then go right along the full length of each wire, bending it sharply to check for cracks and loose insulation.

SPARK ADVANCE

There is often more gold in the spark advance curve than in any other single factor of the tune-up picture. Factory advance curves must be a compromise between acceleration, low-end flexibility, fuel economy, idling, and knock with carbon build-up. The chances are very good you can improve on this compromise. Unfortunately, advance curve modification is one of the toughest jobs you can tackle on an engine. For one thing, stock distributors do not provide for *adjustment* of the curve; if an ignition test shows the curve to be off you have to replace springs or breaker plates. Furthermore it's very hard to make general recommendations for changes in stock curves; every engine is an individual case—and experiment is the only way to find what curve the engine actually *wants*.

In general, most late V-8 engines will give better all-around performance with (1) 4 to 8° more *initial* advance than stock, (2) a bit faster *advance rate* at the low end, and (3) *less* total advance at the high end. An accompanying graph shows the general idea. (Note that this only applies to full-throttle pulling, so only the centrifugal advance mechanism would be involved on all cars except the '49-'56 Ford products.) Here are some ideas for experimenting:



Initial advance, of course, can be quickly set by rotating the distributor and checking with a timing light. The rate of spark advance at the low end could be increased by *decreasing* the tension of the springs that resist the centrifugal weights; on Ford products you would decrease the tension of the spring that restrains the vacuum advance diaphragm. This can be done by stretching the stock springs, or finding a looser spring that will fit. Then for cutting off maximum advance you would have to change the position of the positive stop built into the distributor. The layout here will vary with the distributor. On most centrifugal advances the weights are slotted, and a pin hits the end of the slot to stop the advance. Easiest way to change



this would be to elongate the hole the pin sets in, so its position could be adjustable. On Ford Motor distributors you can install a special screw on the breaker plate with an eccentric washer that overlaps the positioning slot; the washer can be adjusted (by rotating) to contact the stop pin before it reaches the end of the slot. (In passing I might mention that some later distributors feature a fast spark advance at very low speeds, then a slower advance up to the stop. This is accomplished either by having the two weight springs of different tension, or by having one spring post held by a light flat strip that bends and hits a stop as the weights start to rotate. These layouts can be modified in the same ways outlined above.)

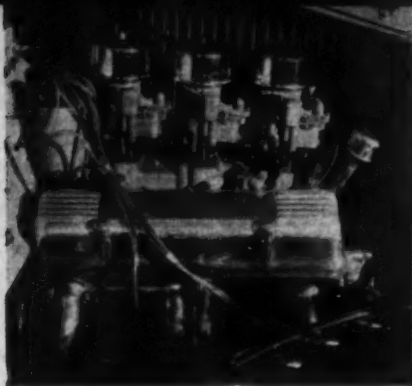
Well, that about covers it. At least this is about as far as you can go without spending much money, or tearing the engine down. Of course, "internal tuning" can work wonders, too—things like increasing bearing clearances, aligning rods, balancing, etc. These things would be the next steps after the above conventional tuning.

So you'd better get busy! ●

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Author Huntington points out in the story that it is getting harder and harder to improve upon late model Detroit engines, since most of them employ the same hop up modifications the hot rodders used earlier. So instead of expensive stroking and boring, it is advantageous to proceed with a very careful tune up job. This will, more often than not, produce more power than the addition of a costly item of speed equipment. At least you might attain something near the advertised hp rating of your engine rather than about half of what ads say you have.





When asked to list the types of cars previously owned, owner Stone replied, "Man, just name it. I've owned 'em all. I know where to get 'em!" And that pretty much sums up this Dallas, Texas, enthusiast's interest in cars. A whole host of machinery preceded the "Ballin' Stone," but this super-sporty Deuce is the favored one. It was a 1/32 class winner with an a.i. of 13.32 and top speed of 109.85. Power source is a 300-inch Chevrolet with lumpy cam and lifters, Edelbrock manifold. Ignition is by a Vortex mag.

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Photos by Katoyanagi



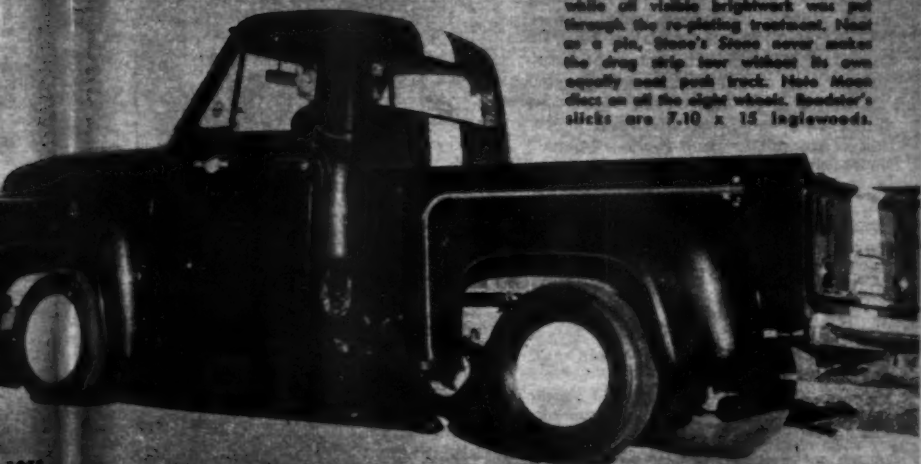


...t name it. I've either just sold it, have
...thusiast's interest in things automotive.
...is the fastest one. At '57 Nationals
...is a 200-inch Chevy bored to 4 inches



Mr's ROLLIN' STONE

Texas record holder



The entire front suspension is chromed while all visible brightwork was put through the re-plating treatment. Next as a pin, Stone's Stone never makes the drag strip tow without its own equally neat push truck. Note Moon discs on all the eight wheels. Speedster's slicks are 7.10 x 15 lagiewoods.

The Informed One

By GERALD ROUDE

Illustrations by Peter Millar

ONE PASTNOON I decided to hit the pad early after tooling the town. I wheeled my twisting monster toward the stable with the utmost pride. As the walking gandered and gawked at my joy, I would tickle the long skinny pole and let the quivers of the movie town sounds astound them. That's the halter's noise that would vibrate their long bones. I was in complete contentment when I bared the little pad. I had the notion of slapping the straw quick after that run.

Curling in the curved one for a few splits and watching the idiot box's image, the noiser rang forth. I opened the slammer and found Old John from the next row. John wanted to borrow a pair of grippers. "Sure thing, Boy, meet me at my stable and we'll dig the grippers for you."

"I didn't know you had a stable," said John.

"Why, that's where I keep my twister."

He quickly grabbed me and said that

John was scammin'. "Hey, John!" I yelled. "You forgot the grippers you came on for. Well, guess I'll get to slap straw after all."

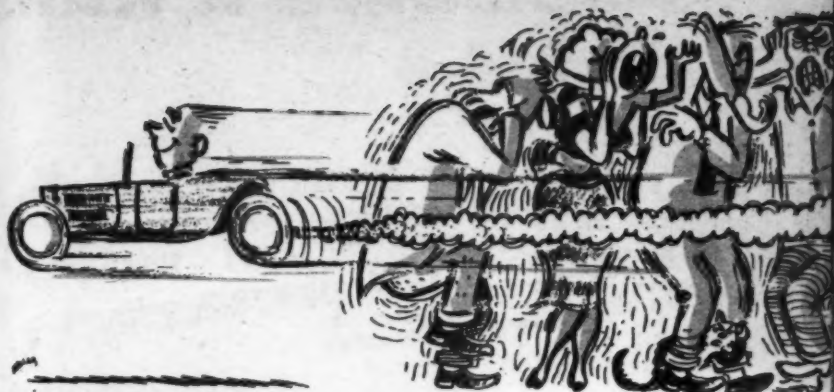
as long as snakes are dangerous I'd better not go out there. Then he mumbled something about having to go. "Don't fly yet, John," I said, "You haven't latched onto the grippers yet."

We crawled to the stable and unbared the pad. I flipped the luminaries and with pride displayed my joy. "That's my monster, John."

I asked how he liked it. Cautiously he gawked then noised that a monster



ROD & CUSTOM



"I'd been tooling the town while the walking gandered, and let the quivers of the movie town sounds astound them. Now to slap the straw."

wasn't to be viewed. I pointed to my Rocketed Henry and sounded off of its potential. "John, when I blast the quarter traps with this sheen, all the chumps will have to tool back if they're looking for metal. If all they're doing is checking their cans, the only thing they're loosing is splits and blow-juice."

"I've heard of traps of all sizes, but never quarter traps. And one more thing, how do you blast traps and still have them left for others to use?" That was John noising.

"You don't really explode the trap, John, but you do try to tear up the records already set by putting your stamper clear into the jugs sitting atop the powerhouse at your beck and call. John, with the rolling A's and the top T's, this chilliest of all sheen pumps should easily clear the ends and middle of the strip."

"Say, John," I went on, "stick your poppers under this tank and noise about how you dig the torque takers. They put the top T's to the slicks where it will do the most good. It has to hold in order to swallow the stress produced by the mill. You may not

believe this, but the bent-eight at the end of your poppers has the limit in cubes. And it churns a tremendous bump-stick. At first I was blowing to two quad jugs, but I ditched that for four double jugs without pressure."

Though Old John's peepers popped, I sallied on. "That long jump breaks two windings with the utmost ease. Had to ditch the juice pushers, too, and add solids. Even had to put over-twisted ones to hold the stems in place. The buckets are topped, too, John. I finished the sewers to gleaming and split a few to let it breathe. Then I buttoned all this to a sticker and went the limit of 7000 and it stayed with me. It's the sticker that yanks the Abe clogs to twist the X and push force through the main link. At the aft is a growler set with 4.37's for the traps. That's why I need the torque-takers to hold the balonies."

"Well, John," I concluded. "What do you think?"

"John?? John... **HEY, JOHN!**" He was scrammin'. "Hey! You forgot the grippers."

Guess I'll get to slap the quick straw after all. ●

START - FINISH

*a step by step
how-to-do-it on the construction
of a car for scale model road racing*

PART III

IT WILL not be our aim to present the last word in track design and layout—one with long straightaways; sweeping curves and severe esses. Rather, we are attempting to construct a fairly simple circuit intended for home or clubhouse use.

We have drawn heavily from our previous attempts at track laying, and hope to help the new enthusiasts over the more difficult spots.

The first item on the agenda for this effort was the choice of a satisfactory layout shape. The course ultimately decided upon incorporates short straight runs, with gradients, minimum radius curves, and an interesting set of S bends to test driver ability. This particular shape is desirable also in that it provides a relatively long lap distance for the small area in use. The intricacies of a "double level" track was avoided, and one overpass

suffices for the entire course. Lap travel averages out at 33 feet. One disadvantage is present, however, in that the lap distances are not precisely equal for all rails. But the shorter inner lane contains two minimum radius corners which slows lap times to that of the longer rails but which have larger radius curves.

The shape was laid out to scale before construction began. The next consideration was given to the choice of rail laying method. Many different rail laying techniques are in use, each with its own merits. After some discussion it was decided to use the drawn brass rail manufactured by Model Road Racing Cars, Ltd., of Bournemouth, England. This rail is produced solely for rail car use, but in appearance resembles ordinary model railroad rail. Small nylon pegs secure the guide and ground rails to the track

RACING CHASSIS

Rods and Customs in Miniature

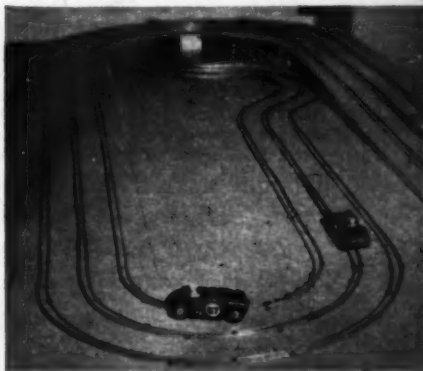
photos by william haynes

surface, with jumper wires carrying the current between sections. This rail is felt to be the best available for use at this time, but requires careful handling for good results. Certain difficulties in laying will be brought out, and the immediate solutions presented.

With the rail ordered, the other materials were secured. Construction began with the building of a sturdy "table". Plywood, $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick, forms the basic top piece. This is framed in with $1" \times 2"$ pieces. A cross piece, also of $1" \times 2"$, is added at the center for rigidity. The actual track surface is $\frac{1}{4}"$ masonite, laid with the smooth side up. The finished shape should be laid out carefully, using a beam compass for the corners. The elevated section is laid out on a separate piece of masonite, then cut out. The approaches to the raised section are sawed from

(continued)

The preceding instalments of this series have revealed the why and wherefores of the construction of an electrically powered sports car. Now that the body and chassis have been finished, we must turn to track construction — as equally important an aspect of rail racing as the car itself. In fact, even the best-engineered car is only as good as the track upon which it runs.



Overall view of the yet-unfinished track. A Lancia-Ferrari (foreground) trails a Maserati on the way to the sharp esses.

BUILDING A RAIL RACING CHASSIS



Duane Coleman, left, and Neil Harrison, MARA members, laying out the course and drilling holes for rail attachment pegs.

the surface proper in the manner of a flap, or lid. This eliminates the inevitable bump resulting from joining a separate grade section to the track. The overpass supports are cut from 1"x2" lengths, and secured with carriage bolts. It might be worthwhile to mention that this circuit is intended for portable operation, and some effort was made to construct a sturdy unit.

After a month's patient waiting, the rail arrived from England. The 6-foot lengths were carefully wrapped and arrived in good condition despite their long voyage. Construction commenced immediately and the following facts should be of help. First, the holding pegs should be strung on the rail before laying. Twelve pegs are required for each rail length. There is no particularly easy way to string the pegs, so one can expect a sore thumb for a day or two. Second, the pegs must be a press fit into the masonite surface.

Be very careful to use a smaller diameter drill than the diameter of the peg shanks. In theory, the pegs protrude through the track, and are to be mushroomed out with a hot iron. We were unable to perfect a satisfactory technique for this operation. Some sloppy holes allowed the rail to pop up off the track, and this has necessitated a few railroad spikes at critical spots. Extra pegs should be fitted on the sharper corners, where tension on the rail may cause a distortion of the radius. Two evenings' work resulted in the layout as pictured. Despite the difficulties encountered, we are satisfied that this method of track laying is the best yet. The critical problem of rail expansion is solved. The pegs allow the rail to expand and contract at will as room temperature varies. Maintenance appears minimal. It might be wise to mention that the section beneath the overpass was necessarily completely

Coleman and Harrison check overpass section for fit, but it won't be securely fastened until the rails are laid on area beneath.



continued

Patience rewarded. A "jury-rigged" wiring setup permits first trip on course. Good performance of Maserati shows on Cook's face!



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Tom Cook, MARA secretary, slips the "golden spike" onto the last link in the course. R & C's track is located in Kalamazoo, Mich.

laid before the upper section was begun.

The materials used on our course were purchased new, and a little ingenuity would result in savings. Even at this rate, the modest sum of \$28.00 has been expended to date, including the \$15.00 spent for the rail. Wiring and scenery are next in order, and their cost will be noted next month.

In order to standardize track dimensions the following figures are in order, these having been adapted from the standards in general use. This allows an interchange of cars for club meets. Please let us emphasize the idea of competition between clubs or groups, for this is the true essence of the sport.

Track standard (for 1/32 scale cars):

1. Guide rails will be spaced $2\frac{1}{2}$ " center to center. The guide rail will act as the negative contact.
2. Ground rails will be spaced $\frac{1}{16}$ " to the left of the guide rail (facing the direction of travel). The ground rail will act as the positive contact.
3. Minimum radius of a 180-degree corner will be six inches.
4. Guide rail height above track surface will be $\frac{1}{16}$ ".

As was previously noted, the next instalment of this series will bring to a conclusion the building of a rail circuit. ●

candescent

EVERYONE TRIES to be original when he builds a custom car, but, Denny Mahoney of Spokane, Washington, really hit the jackpot when he finished restyling his '51 Ford convert. Three years ago, when the series of changes began, the convert was as stock as they come and somewhat worse for wear. Today the red and white combo is an outstanding example of the customizer's touch.

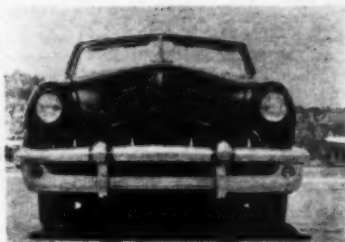
The car has been mildly lowered by cutting the front coils 2 inches and installing 4-inch blocks at the rear. The hood has been nosed, peaked and the corners rounded. The old grille opening was removed and the open shell from a '50 Merc installed. A '53 Merc combination bumper-grille is used to fill the opening and to form the bottom half of the opening. The headlights were frenched and tunnelled using both the '51 and '52 Ford rings. Scoops have been formed into the upper section of each headlight.

Since a flare was required to mold the bumper grille into the front end, a matching flare was molded into the front wheel openings. This is the only modification to the side of the body except for the addition of '58 Buick side trim and rocker molding. The door handles, of course, have been removed and switches installed.

The rear deck has been filled and smoothed and an inside latch installed. A set of '54 Merc taillights have been molded into the back fenders. The stock rear bumper has been removed and a '56 Buick bumper molded into the body panels.

The interior is unusual since it features a padded instrument panel. The entire panel was removed for this operation. The steering column cover, glove door and garnish moldings were all chromed while the panel was out of the car. The seats were upholstered in red and white Naugahyde.

Painted a brilliant Titian red and Fleet white this is one custom that doesn't look like any other. ■



The nosed and rounded hood is stock '51 Ford, but grille opening is '50 Merc and the bumper-teeth '53 Merc.



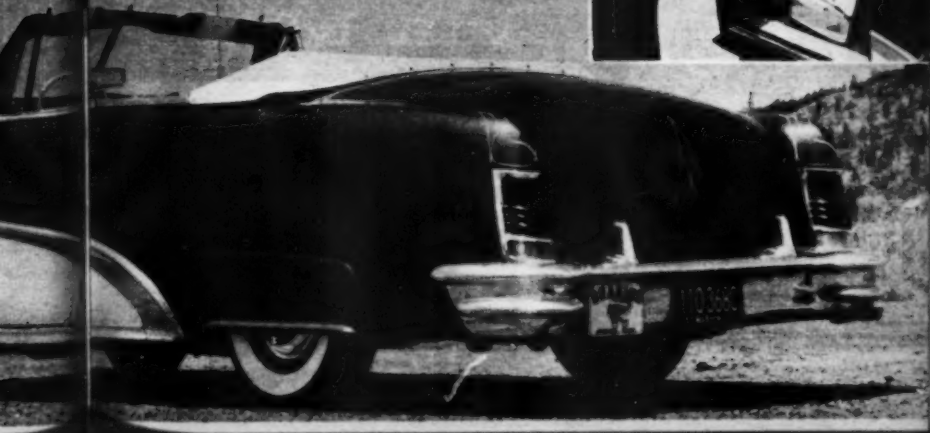
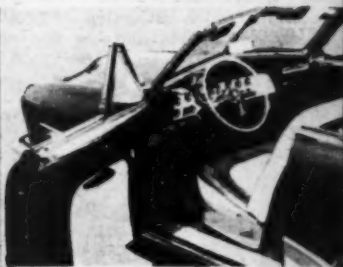
nt custom

By PETER SUKALAC



This Washington-bred Ford custom bears no radical innovations, yet is a head-turner due to careful use of side trim, up to date 2-tone combination, and Merc-like front end which brings up opinions as to the car's true identity.

Comment: Owner's interior features a padded dash, contrasting red and white vinyls, and lavish use of chrome plating. Car is a '51 model.





Photos by Burnley Woods

CONSIDER THE plight of Tom Woods who wanted a custom in the worst way, but found himself smack dab in the middle of Alaska. It wasn't that he didn't have a car to be customized, he had a '52 Ford back home in Hayward, Cal., it was just that he'd let no one touch it other than bodyman-deluxe Joe Bailon — and the two were separated by some 2400 miles.

So the problem was left in the hands of the U. S. mails — letters flying thick and fast with estimates, suggestions, progress reports and the findings of Tom's parents who dropped into Bail-

on's shop and, incidentally, snapped the photos showing the 2-door "in the works."

When it seemed that there would be a shortage of stamps due to the heavy letter writing, things began to shape up and the Ford really began to look like something. The big day, though, was when paint was applied and Tom's parents took the car home to await the arrival of its owner, an Airman 2nd class.

But let's watch the car as it progresses under the capable direction of Joe Bailon. ●

CUSTOM via Mail

Joe Bailon whips up an eye-catching "moderate" for an Alaska-stationed airman



As suggested through sketches sent from Alaska to California, Ford's hood was filled and headlights frenched using chrome-lined rims. The parents, not having been subjected to customizing before, began to doubt their son's sanity about this stage of the game. A perfectly good car, it appeared, was methodically being reduced to ruin.

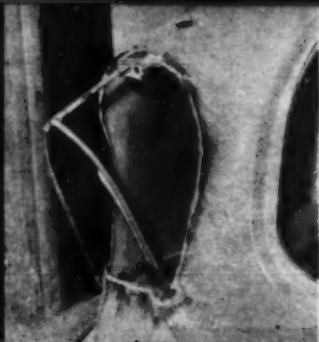


At the same time, the chrome had been stripped from the fenders, and the holes duly filled, and scoops had begun to appear in the leading edges of the rear fenders. All of this, mind you, was discussed and eventually decided upon via letters sent over a distance of 2400 miles — Alaska to Calif. Construction required a full year.



CUSTOM via Mail

continued



In order to work the '56 Lincoln Capri taillights into the rear fenders of the Ford, as directed by owner Woods, Joe Ballon had to weld rod as shown to outline the shape of the finished design. Into this was fitted the . . .

. . . taillight lenses before proceeding to add filler metal. The far-side taillight has progressed further than the one near the camera so a comparison can be seen between the two stages. Owner's home is in Vallejo, Calif.



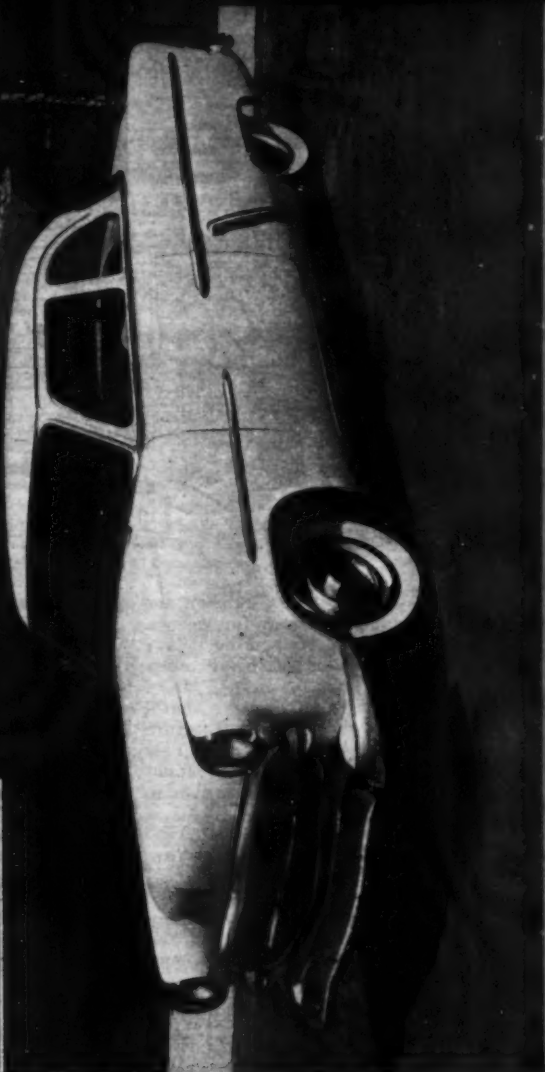
Photo at far left shows taillight progress through the welding stage but before any actual metal working had taken place. From time to time the lens was fitted into opening for check in case distortion had changed opening's shape. Photo at immediate left is of a lens after metalwork was done and primer paint had been applied. Bumper was removed to ease access to areas needing rework.

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The head and tail views on this page show the Custom Via Mail ready for delivery to owner Woods who, until this time, had seen car only in the how-to-do-it photographs on the preceding pages. Mesh grille has been installed, handles removed, and paint applied.

dragnik



MAN, I can say it in a nutshell and have room leftover for echoes. Some cats dream of making heavy bread, some dream of being shipwrecked with Lola or Jayne. Me, I dream of building a Dragster that'll rack-up records *nobody* can fracture unless they use the same bomb. This doesn't mean I dislike money or cannot abide those dolls. It just means, man, I'm for controlled speed like a bank is for loot.

Couple of weeks ago, I'm in the garage — gloating over my fine collection of rare old Stromberg carbs just like the parts-miser I am — when this character sticks his egghead around the door and says: "Are you Ledfoote Zoomm, the fellow who builds those... uh... Dragster-cars?"

"Guilty."

"Then, you're just the chap I want to see!" He stepped into the garage — a little cat with beady eyes behind his thick horn-rims and wearing a set of threads that looked like they hadn't been pressed since irons were invented. "I want you to build one of those... uh... Dragster-cars for me. Can you build one that will go faster than any others have before?"

"Man, I can try," I said honestly. "Oh, bully!" Suddenly, his pallid face turned mildly grim. "I'll show them! Laugh me out of the Rocket Society, will they? I'll show them a thing or two!" He cackled somewhat hysterically to himself.

"Yeh, man," I murmured. "You do that little thing. What're you *talking* about, dad? I hear the beat, but the words ain't coming through. You're gonna show who, what and why?"

A look of wariness scampered across his pinched little features. "Ah, that's a secret! Later. I'll tell you all about it, later! Meanwhile —" he reached inside his coat and brought out a fistful of papers, "— I want you to commence building the car, following these specifications as closely as possible. I'll check with you, from time to time, as the project proceeds."

"Crazy," I allowed agreeably.

"But remember!" he hissed, shoving his face into mine until I was practically breathing through his nose, "Not a word of this to anyone! Guard this information with your life, if need be!"

"Man, this caper's legit, ain't it?"

"Why... uh... certainly, it's legitimate." His face lost some of its inten-

By KARL KOHLER, Boy Storyteller

(author of: "She Had A Face That Stopped Timing Clocks")

nity. "I just want to be sure you understand I must insist we build the car... uh... quietly."

"Dad, I'll muffle the hammers," I promised.

"That's the ticket! I'll stop in next week and see how things are coming along!"

"Things aren't gonna even get away from the curb until you dredge up some loot, man," I mentioned, tactfully grabbing him by the lapel and staring him in the eye. "I'm flatter than potato

I had worked for three weeks - using parts from 2 '39 Packards and 3 Mack truck engines. When the customer came to see it - "Oh Jolly, jolly, jolly" is all he could think of to say.

pan-cakes. I need loot to start this operation. How are you at writing checks and all that?"

"How stupid of me!" he chuckled.

"Yeh, man, how stupid of you," I agreed.

"Money," he chortled, whipping out checkbook and pen, "is no object!"

"The heck you say."

I stared at the check. I never saw a five-figure check with my name on it, before. *Cheez*, I thought, *this cat must have all the ready funds this side of the Finance Companies Association*. I glanced at the check again and felt sudden concern for the private goldmine standing in a draft beside me.

"And if that's not quite enough," he told me, "just say the word: there's plenty more where that came from!"

I wrapped a blanket around him and carried him out to his stock Buick outside. "Take care of yourself, man," I pleaded. "Don't catch cold or nothing. And watch the intersections on your way home."

That night, I began putting his Dragster together - working from the drawings and specifications he gave me. It was real screwy right from the start. In the first place, his drawings

indicated a car that looked more like a space-ship than a dragster. Then, I remembered the little creep's checkbook and decided I could build the bomb to resemble a porch-swing if that's the way he wanted it. In fact, considering the kind of money he was willing to toss around, I could even dump my ethics and build the draggin' wagon to look like one of them foreign-type ruobies, if necessary.

Constructing the body (from two old '39 Packards) wasn't much strain. It was the mills that presented a problem. The blueprints called for three reworked Mack truck engines to be installed, tandem. Then, too, there was the weird exhaust and a cooling system that was right out of the comic books. Somehow, I got it all built and shoved into place. The total effect was something fierce. That buggy looked just wild enough to blur through anybody's traps and be back before the starter's feet hit the sod.

Anyway, I had worked for three weeks. Then, my customer was back again - bouncing enthusiastically around the monster and making little peeps of joy.

"Jolly!" he chirped. "Oh, jolly, jolly, jolly!"

"Okay, man," I muttered. "Enjoy your jollies while you can because there ain't a strip in the country that will consider this thingie entry material."

"What did you say?" He bounced over, running a hand fondly along the fantastic lines of the dragster. "Did I hear you say something about strips?"

"You did, dad. When the NHRA or the ATAA get a load of this baby - they'll probably legislate laws against it. Anyway, it's a cinch you'll never be able to enter the alleged car in any competitions."

This information didn't seem to touch him.

(continued)

"Do you know that deserted airstrip, out past the edge of town?" he asked, lowering his voice.

I nodded.

"Meet me there, tomorrow night, and bring the car with you!" His beady eyes gleamed strangely. I'll mix the fuel and have it ready! *Tomorrow night we'll test it!* By George, laugh at me, will they? I'll show them he who laughs last, laughs longest!"

I backed off and picked up a wrench. He was beginning to look a little violent.

"I'll bring the stopwatch!" he said merrily and departed, still hooting happily to himself.

"A way-out type, that cat," I decided aloud.

The next night, I tooled out to the deserted airstrip, pulling the monster on a trailer behind my '50 Ford custom coupe. My customer was already there, parked beside the strip and busily pouring stinky liquids, one right after the other, into a large can — humming to himself as he stirred up the mess.



"What's in it?" I wrinkled my nose.

"Oh, bully! You got here safely!" He peered in all directions "were you noticed? Were you followed, do you think?" He seemed pretty nervous about it.

"Naw — relax. What are you putting in that can, man? It smells up a worse storm than hangover breath crossed with skunk-juice." I sniffed cautiously. "If that stuff is just half as power-

ful as it smells, this car oughta be a winner for sure."

"Well, it's a secret formula, of course!" he giggled. "I can tell you it contains certain ingredients which will make speed history!"

We fueled the monster up and he climbed into the cockpit. Those three Mack Truck mills turned over on that evil-smelling fuel with the smoothest, most contented rumble I've heard in ten years of listening to engines. They

dragnik

continued

purred, I tell you. Easing up to the line, the little creep let the mills warm — then, signaling me, he tromped on the throttle and thundered off down the strip. When he came roaring back, I was still staring disbelievingly at my rough timing estimate.

"I m-must be wrong," I stammered. "According t-to what I can f-figure, you were doing something like 280.54 mph."

"Oh, dear!" he sighed. "It *must* be the air-resistance. Surely, there must be *some* way to improve the streamlining. Why, that's hardly enough speed to even —"

"YOU MEAN YOU DON'T THINK 280.54 MPH IS FAST?"

"Hardly," he said disdainfully. "We have got to do a lot better than *that*. I suggest you do something, perhaps, with the fins."

I towed the monster back to the shop in a personal fog, telling myself it all must be some fantastic kind of dream — speed record and everything. In the garage, my wacky little customer walked around the dragster, his brow furrowed thoughtfully. Suddenly, he whipped out a slide-rule and began furiously making calculations to him-



self, I just sat and gazed at the piece of machinery which I, Ledfoote Zoomm, had built and which I, imagination-happy Zoomm, had clocked at a world's record for acceleration. My head felt like it was stuffed with three-ply chaos.

"There, now!" exclaimed the egg-head. "I have it! You just re-adjust the positioning of these two fins -" he indicated them, "- and everything will be hunky-dory! Then we can return to the strip and really do something!"

"Man, this is the craziest!"

He frowned all over me.

"Watch your language, please. And hurry. We haven't got all night." Anxiously, he peered out the garage door as though he were expecting somebody. "Please reposition those fins and let us be on our way."

Changing the absurd fins took about an hour. We loaded the dragster on the trailer again and took out for the airstrip. He kept glancing out the rear window as we barreled along, squinting worriedly at the empty road behind us in the moonlight.

"Hey, man," I said evenly. "You're not hot, are you?"

"Hot?"

"I mean, man, are you expecting the fuzz or anything like that?"

"Here's the airstrip!" he said excitedly. "Hurry!"

We unloaded the monster and warmed it up. While the three Mack mills were grumbling silkily on the cool night air, I leaned into the cockpit.

"How about letting me drive it this time, Dad?"

"Absolutely not!" he snapped. "You don't know the first thing about orbital computing."

"Orbital-com-Whating?"

Just then, a long white panel truck shot out of the darkness and careened across the strip toward us. As it came closer, I could see it was some kind of ambulance.

"Man, we got company. Did you rent a meatwagon for safety standby?"

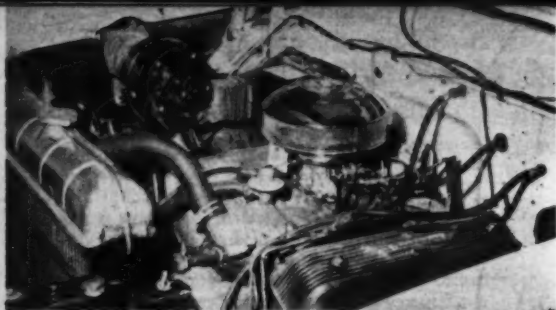
"Stand clear!" he yelled, revving the engines up until they fairly tore the dragster apart with the vibration. "Stand clear, I say! GOODBYE EARTH!"



The monster spun its slicks and screamed off down the strip, knocking me tailbone over appetite as it dug out. I sat up, dazed, watching the car gather speed - faster and faster - and then, as it shrieked along the strip, it suddenly left the ground and went sailing up...up...up into the clear night air!

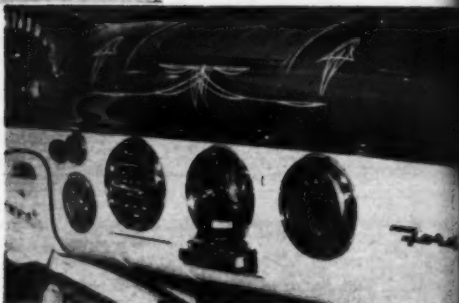
It was gone!

(continued on p. 61)



Hefty output produced by mill is evidence of careful tuning and choice of top-notch speed equipment. Owner Frank Gianformaggio boasts that Vickie is the only Missouri '55 running fins. They were originally Stude

New instruments were added to keep track of things beneath the nosed hood, and include tachometer, fuel pressure gauge and oil heat indicator. The dash striping is the work of California's own specialist, Von Dutch.



Photos by Robert Hegge



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custom

While most customizers agree that there may not be the most radical custom around, it definitely
shows the hand in custom showing in the mid-West. Consisting of white hole filling, outside tail
pipe, moderate grille changes and raised lowering, this is what is and of the rumples job.





pencil's RED H

goin' truck is a

Harold Pencil's bright lil' '34 pickup lost nearly a foot of its height, five inches credited to top chopping, the balance to channeling. The hauler doubles as a tidy street machine, but spends most of its time running the quarter — it's best time to date in this department; 112.50 mph. Punch is provided by T-bird engine with tuned exhaust, an Iskenderian E2 cam, JE pistons, an Edelbrock manifold mounting three 48's, and a compression ratio of 12 to 1. Transmission stemmed from a '48 Lincoln and is mated to a '40 Ford rear end with 3.78 gears. Using pickup as droggin' material is a bit rough since rear ends become skitterish under hard acceleration with nothing above but a lightweight bed. But Pencil's big 'Bird is far enough off to offset this tendency and it gets off the line in good enough shape to be a consistent victor and holder of many class trophies. Stark interior (below, left, reveals lightning techniques and use of nothing not deemed strictly purposeful. "Upholstery is done in black enamel," says owner Pencil, a resident of Vandalia, Ohio. Note carefully placed holes in frame to rid the light Y-ton of as much unnecessary weight as possible. The consistent pickup is painted a dazzling Flame Red.

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ERASER

truck is a ready racer



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Wetly 296-inch Thunderbird engine emits an ear-shattering blast with its skyward-pointing stacks. Bobbed fenders are trimmed to the point of near-non-existence, yet they qualify the truck for street use. On highway, though, exhaust is necessarily rerouted.



By JAMES RAWLINGS



ARIN CEE BY MILLAR



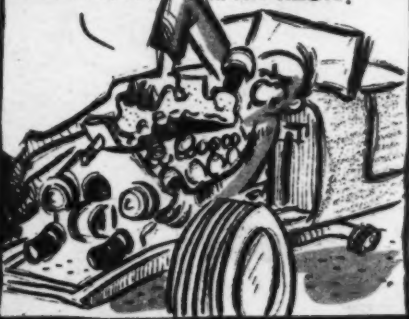
YOU'VE SURE GOT YOUR NERVE!... ASKING \$125 FOR AN OVERHAUL...

\$125 FOR A SIMPLE OVERHAUL... I'LL BE DARN!... I CAN USE THE GOLD ON SUMPTIN' ELSE....



HUMMM... SUMPTIN'S WRONG.... GET THESE PARTS... AW HECK!

ROAD PANTHERS PITTSBURG



...THANKS... BUT NO THANKS!... I'LL DO IT MYSELF AND POCKET THE BREAD!



SEE THERE! THAT WASN'T SO BAD, WAS IT?... AND THINK OF THE SAVINGS...

SOUTHERN SPORTSMAN CAR CLUB VIRGINIA



YOU FEEL LIKE MAKIN' COUPLEA BUCKS?

OUR READERS WRITE—

continued from p. 9

ELECTRIC RAIL RACING

Our club, The Modelers, is very interested in building a model drag strip like that shown in the March '58 R & C.



Could we obtain plans and perhaps a parts list for it? We'd also like to know if a slightly larger scale could be used in building the strip so that the Revell plastic car bodies could be used. As it is, they are a little large for your scale.

Tom Collins

Niles, Ohio

● The construction of dragsters to a larger scale, so that Revell components can be used, will be covered as soon as development is complete. Sources of supply for parts will be noted wherever possible in our succeeding articles.

Your March article on model drag racing was extremely interesting and is the first I've heard of this fascinating hobby. It really sounds great!

Can you tell me if there is an active group anywhere near me? If so, I'd like to become acquainted with them. If not, how do I get a club started?

(continued over leaf)

MODEL "A" RESTORER'S SPECIALS

Firewall patent data plate, state year \$3.75
Engine enamel, original green \$1.50/pt.
Heat resistant manifold paint, gray, \$1.50/pt.
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Fender welt \$4.50/yd.
Model "A" Ford Service Bulletins complete \$5.00
Front floor mats '26-'32 \$4.95
Spring shackles, orig. type, front or rear \$3.50/set
Hood latches, replacement type \$1.00/ea.
Running board covering '26-'31 \$4.95/set
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Spark plugs, Champion C-4 \$1.00 ea.
Spark plug leads, original brass \$3.50/set
Light wiring looms \$5.95/ea.
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G. H. "Tiny" SNELL

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RAMCOTE
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Restores — Colors
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Renew dull, faded, worn leather or vinyl plastic upholstery. Car, plane or boat seats, headliners, sidepanels will look new in any color. Redesign, customize new or used interiors. You can change color too! Easily applied brush or spray. RamCote Flexible Finishes

(not a paint) impregnates leather or vinyl plastic upholstery. Won't chip or peel. Fadeproof, waterproof. Use on home & lawn furniture. Write for free information, color chart, and dealer location.

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Chicago 21, Ill. Dept. RC



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VALVE LIFTERS
VALVE GUIDES
VALVE SEALS
VALVE SPRINGS
VALVE KEYS
VALVE LIFTERS
VALVE GUIDES
VALVE SEALS

The new sensation at the drag. MUST boost performance of an engine, no matter how 'hot' it is running now. Low profile design gives more than 2" extra hood clearance. Can be very easily converted back to efficient Ideal Dual Carb. setup for road use by blocking off 4 and Carb. mounts.

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THE 1941 FORD was a favorite of customizers before World War II, in fact it remained high on the popularity list for quite a few years after hostilities ceased. Reader Vernon Hilton, who hails from Spray, North Carolina, felt that if the '41 was good before the war, that it would be equally good right now. So, he acquired the ragtop shown here.

Changes wrought include a later hood and front fenders, the trim holes of these items being filled. An Olds grille was positioned between frenched headlights. And because turn signal indicators are practically standard equipment on late model cars, Vernon added a set to his 17-year-old, frenching them to the fenders beneath the headlights.

Deck ornamentation was ash-canned and a Buick bumper was narrowed so it presently acts as a fender guard at the aft end of the collapsible. Other items include lowering, a custom leatherette interior, exhausts through the rear fenders, skirts and an Olds front bumper.

Looks like North Carolina has "arrived" on the custom scene. ●



ROD & CUSTOM

OUR READERS WRITE—

continued from p. 57

Also, what cost is involved in building a scale dragster?
Jim Cusick

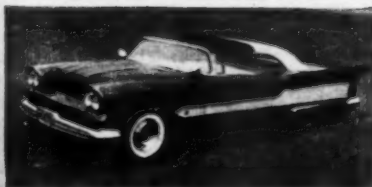
Stockton, Calif.

● If interest warrants, R & C will eventually sponsor a national club. Separate divisions would be formed for drag and road racing cars. In the meantime, you might form your own local organization along the lines of any full-size auto club. Be sure to watch R & C for the latest developments in this new, fast-growing field.

PAINT QUERY

Here's an odd question for you—hope you will answer it for me. I noted in an older issue about the completion
(continued on p. 54)

MID-WEST CAR SHOW COMING UP



GERALD L. GERBER, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Rod & Custom Association, has announced his 2nd annual show. Last year's event drew over 20,000 spectators and this show promises to be even bigger and better. The Fort Wayne Memorial Coliseum will be the site again of the gala event, with the dates being May 14th through the 18th. A leading attraction will be one of California's top prize-winning customs, Bill Carr's Barris-built '55 Chevy. There will also be a lowering machine in use at the show (bring your hood with you) as well as a booth where scalloping and striping will be going on during the show hours. A total of 20 classes will vie for trophies, with top prize being a trophy nearly five feet tall. ●

JUNE, 1958

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DRAGNIK

continued from p. 51

I was sitting, gaping up at the sky, when these cats in white coats came sprinting over.

"Have you seen a small man —"

"You just missed him," I whispered hoarsely, jerking a thumb at the stars. "He went thataway, pops."

The following morning, all the papers carried the story of famous Professor Von Whoosh — the noted authority on rocketry who had suffered a nervous breakdown and was reported

missing from an expensive sanatorium — being found wading out of the surf, at Pismo Beach, and mumbling incoherently about a manned spaceship without safety belts.

Since I haven't read any flying saucer reports about a dragster flopping to earth anywhere in the world, I suppose it's up there, spinning around with Sputnik and Explorers I and II.

Wait'll somebody actually gets up there and finds *Dragnik*. They'll flip when they dig that roll-bar and those three Mack Truck engines.

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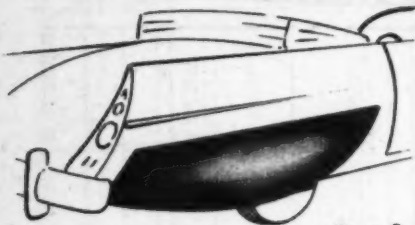
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NEXT MONTH

OUR READERS WRITE—

continued from p. 59

of the R & C Dream Truck and the fact that the paint used on it cost \$25.00 a quart. Now, I swear by your magazine but my Dad says that no automotive paint exists which could conceivably cost this much. Would you please verify this price for me, so I can convince Dad that R & C is always right?

Sam Kitchak, Jr. Ashland, Wisconsin

• You and your Dad both read right, Sam. \$25.00 per quart — un-thinned — is what the paint for our Dream Truck set us back. Pearl-escent is what the substance is known as, an imparted paint comprised, among other things, of ground fish scales. We understand other compounds have been developed to give the pearl effect at a lower price, but when the truck's color was chosen late in '56, \$25.00 per quart it was.

THEY'RE EVERYWHERE

Most people write to magazines, it seems, when they want to take issue with a statement made earlier, or show how smart they are because they've run across a trivial error. Me, I'm just writing to say thanks for the ideas, tips and suggestions I've gained through reading your fine magazine during the past five years.

Wilbur Mortinson

Cairo, Egypt

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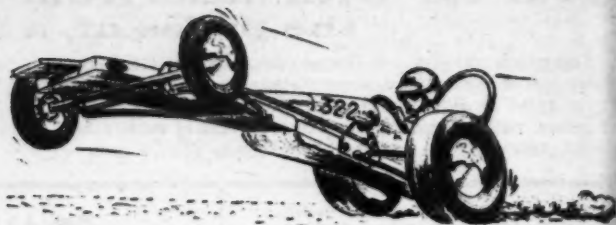
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12950

CALIFORNIA

ME, 1958



THE ARRIVAL of the go kart on the hot rod scene has revived interest in the old 2-cycle engine. (By "old" I mean that the 2-cycle principle was developed at least 20 years before the 4-stroke!) Editor Murray has suggested that I touch on a few of the mysteries of this off-beat form of locomotion.

In the first place, do you all known what the term "2-cycle" means? It should really be called 2-stroke cycle, because each half revolution is one stroke of the overall operating cycle of a piston engine. With a conventional 4-stroke engine your full cycle consists of the suction stroke, compression, combustion, and exhaust. You get one power stroke each two revolutions. With the 2-stroke engine exhaust and intake is accomplished with the piston near the bottom of its stroke, so there are only two strokes in the cycle — up for compression and down on combustion. We fire once each revolution. There are several possible ways to exhaust and charge the cylinder. Simplest is to cut ports in the lower cylinder wall, so the piston will uncover them near bottom stroke; you can put the intake ports on one side and the exhaust opposite. Or some engines have only intake ports in the wall, with regular poppet valves in the head of the cylinder for the exhaust to escape through. Or some reverse this and put the intake valves in the head and the exhaust in the wall. In any event the big advantage of the 2-stroke engine is *simplicity*. Since you can get along without valves and cams you can save money, weight, complications — and you can *wind*.

The big problem with the 2-stroke cycle is *exhaust scavenging* — in other words, getting the waste exhaust gases out of the cylinder efficiently. On a 4-stroke you literally *shove* them out with the piston. With the 2-stroke you have to depend on excess pressure on the intake charge to *blow* them out. (And you blow out good fuel, too.) The simplest way to build up this required scavenging pressure is to suck the fuel-air mixture into the *crankcase* on the up-stroke of the piston, and then compress it by piston displacement on the down-stroke. This is not too efficient, though, because you can't reduce the volume of the crankcase enough to develop more than 2 or 3 lbs./sq. in. pressure. Result: A volumetric efficiency of only about 40% — about half of what you can get on a 4-stroke engine — and relatively low thrust on the piston during combustion. Even though you have twice as many power strokes per minute, your horsepower per cubic inch is not much better than the average 4-stroke.

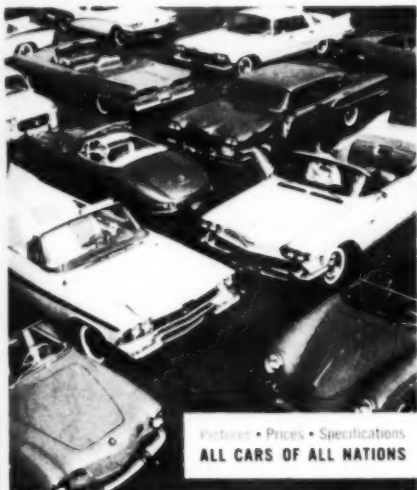
Obviously *supercharging* is the answer with the 2-stroke engine. More later. ●

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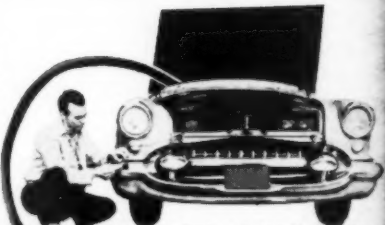
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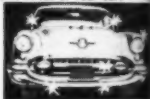
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APPLICATION**



MAIL COUPON NOW - YOU RISK NOTHING

If you want to put new, permanent, gleaming plating on your own car, you can do it right away and not risk a dime, if you are not **COMPLETELY** satisfied with great results, just return your outfit in 10 days in good condition and get **FULL CASH REFUND**! **ACT NOW!** Here's what you get: **SPEEDPLATER** Brush, with permanent Anode for life-time plating; Wires and Clamps for battery hook-up; enough solutions to plate several cars; Special Buffing Wheels and Buffing Compound, Special Metal Polish, full simple instructions. Just mail coupon with only \$1 deposit, then pay postman \$13.95 plus postage when **SPEEDPLATER** arrives, or send \$14.95 with order and we pay all postage charges. **SAME GUARANTEE EITHER WAY. CASH REFUND IF NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED.**

CAR DEALERS & SERVICE STATIONS Make BIG PROFITS with Special HEAVY DUTY OUTFIT

Now you can make **TERRIFIC PROFITS** plating right in your own shop — without removing bumpers, grille, etc. Increase value of your used cars! Touch up new cars! Restore worn chrome areas to bright, new sparkle! Buick Dealer says: "Wonderful. We had excellent results". Heavy Duty Outfit electroplates on current from standard 12 volt battery. Entire Outfit, **COMPLETE**, only \$34.95. Includes Plating Brush with Permanent Anode, Wires and Clips for Battery Connection, Special Buffing Wheels and Compound, Special Grinding Wheel, Stripping Solution to remove old chromium, Rust Remover, Special Polish, enough Plating Solutions for dozens of cars! You quickly make back entire cost on your very first job! Additional supplies always available from us at rock-bottom prices. **MONEY BACK GUARANTEE.** Order now. IF C.O.D. send \$5 deposit.

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